(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI RATNAMALA D. SAVANOOR) : (a) Yes Sir, Special Central Assistance (SCA) under Hill Area Development Programme (HADP) is provided to designated hill areas, i.e., hill areas of Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam and designated talukas of the Western Ghats. The total SCA available under HADP is allocated between HADP and Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP) in the ratio of 86.61: 13.39. Inter se distribution of SCA for HADP is done on the basis of population and area of the region, assigning equal weightage to these factors; for WGDP, population is assigned a weightage of 25% and area 75%.

(b) to (d): Yes Sir; However, owing to paucity of funds, it has been decided not to extend HADP to any new hill areas, including the hill areas of Madhya Pradesh during the Ninth Five year Plan.

[English]

Non-Payment of Wages by Sick PSUs

2323. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the delay in the payment of dues like Provident Fund, ESI etc. to the workers of several sick Public Sector Undertaking (PSUs);

(b) whether sick PSUs owe to the workers above Rs. 100 crore;

(c) if so, the reasons for the non-payment of these statutory dues to the workers; and

(d) the steps taken to ensure early payment of pending dues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M. P. VEERENDRA KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d): An amount of Rs. 209.12 crore is outstanding against the Sick Public Sector Undertakings on account of the ESI and EPF dues. The reason for default is attributable to poor financial health of such PSUs. Efforts for recovery of the dues outstanding against the defaulting PUSs are constantly being made.

Shortage of Software Engineers

2324. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a shortage of Software Engineers in the country;

(b) if so, the present position with regard to their demand and availability; and

(c) the steps taken to provide necessary training and education in the said field in order to remove the shortage of Software Engineers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONIYAN) : (a) to (c) : The demand for Software Engineers is increasing progressively. At present there are a number of educational institutions in the formal and non - formal sector which are catering to this growing demand. Government is taking a number of initiatives for increasing computer manpower output, particularly from the premier institutions, by strengthening of the existing institutions, Training of Teachers, Development and Dissemination of quality course material as also initiating steps for setting up new institutions. In order to ensure quality output from the non-formal sector (private/public), Department of Electronics through its Society namely, Department of Electronics Accreditation of Computer Courses (DOEACC) is implementing a scheme on Accreditation of Computer Courses under which institutions meeting certain well defined criteria are given accreditation for running 'O' (Foundation) 'A' (Advanced Diploma) 'B' (MCA) and 'C' Post Graduate) level courses.

National AIDS Control Programme

2325. SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Andhra Pradesh was included in the National AIDS Control Programme launched at a cost of Rs. 220.60 crores for 1992-97 which came to an end in March this year;

(b) if so, whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has urged the Union Government to continue the said AIDS programme in the State in view of sharp rise in the spread of AIDS disease; and

(c) if so, the decision taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) The National AIDS Control Programme was launched in all the States/UTs in the country including

Andhra Pradesh in 1992 for five years with the World Bank credit of US $ 84 million. The implementation of the Programme was reviewed and based on the recommendations, the programme has been extended upto March, 1999.

(b) and (c) The State Government of Andhra Pradesh is sending the annual action plan every year for the implementation of the programme and funds are released after examination by National AIDS Control Organisation. The Action Plan for 1997-98 for Andhra Pradesh has since been received and approved by the Union Government.

Vacant Posts

2326. SHRI N.J. RATHWA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of appointment made in departments/ undertakings under his Ministry during the last three years as on date post-wise;

(b) the number of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribe candidates appointed out of them;

(c) whether some posts reserved for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes are still lying vacant;

(d) if so, the details thereof post-wise;

(e) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by the Government for filling the reserved posts; and

(f) the time by which vacant reserved posts are likely to be filled and the reasons for delay in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI RATNAMALA D. SAVANOOR) : (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Trade with China

2327. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Sikkim has asked the Union Government for opening up the Nathua-La Pass in the State to facilitate trade with neighbouring China; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA) : (a) and (b): Border trade through additional points, including Natu-La Pass, in Sikkim, continues to remain under discussion with the Chinese Side. At present, India and China have arrangements for border trade across Lipulekh Pass (Uttar Pradesh) and Shipki La Pass (Himachal Pradesh).

[Translation]

NAM Foreign Ministers Conference

2328. SHRI SUSHIL CHANDRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state the expenditure incurred by the Union Government on NAM Foreign Ministers' conference held in April, 1997 in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): Sir, the total expenditure incurred on XII Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non Aligned Countries held in New Delhi from April 4 to 8, 1997 was Rs. 5,22,27,255/-. The amount of Rs. 3,46,67,981/- has already been paid whereas bills amounting to Rs.1,75,59,274/- are under process for payment. The expenditure is based on the bills received/ processed till August 1, 1997.

Shortage of Disposable Syringes

2329. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been invited to the news reported in the 'Hindustan Times' dated May 21st, 1997 wherein it has been mentioned that there is shortage of disposable syringes and patients are asked to buy their own syringes in most of the hospitals including Central Government hospitals running in Delhi;

(b) if so, whether glass syringes were used for injunction to a patients in safdarjung Hospital;

(c) if so, the facts of the case reported therein;

(d) the reaction of Government in this regard; and

(e) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure the availability of disposable syringas in all the central hospitals running in National Capital Territory of Delhi to avoid the spread of fatal diseases like AIDS and Hepatitis B?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Safdarjung Hospital has reported that no records are maintained about the type of syringes used in case of a particular patient. Generally, syringes or needles used are disposable. However, glass syringes are